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PEACEKEEPING, PEACE ENFORCEMENT,  
AND THE UNITED STATES

BY

Lieutenant Colonel Steven J. Argersinger, MI  
Senior Service College Fellow  
Harvard University

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# **Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and the United States**

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven J. Argersinger**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PEACEKEEPING, PEACE ENFORCEMENT, AND THE UNITED STATES**

**LTC Steven J. Argersinger**

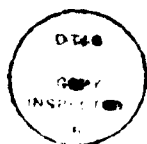
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Successful peacekeeping operations have clearly defined and attainable objectives, begin with a desire for peace among the conflicting parties, have the cooperation of all conflicting parties, and military leaders are given adequate time to plan the deployment of forces. Finally, successful peacekeeping operations create a buffer zone between conflicting parties.

Peacekeeping is not a suitable mission for US military units. The US should seek ways other than by contributing troops to support the United Nations in its peacekeeping efforts. Peace enforcing is the more appropriate role for the United States. Working in conjunction with the United Nations and various regional organizations, the United States can support peacekeeping by helping to establish the conditions for peace.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
<b>Chapter 1 — Peacekeeping.....</b>	<b>1</b>
The Bottom Line in Peacekeeping.....	2
Three Peacekeeping Operations	
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Golan Heights.....	3
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.....	4
Multinational Force and Observers, Sinai Peninsula.....	8
Successful Peacekeeping Operations Look Like This.....	9
 <b>Chapter 2 — When Peacekeeping Does Not Work: The Case of the</b>	
<b>Multinational Force in Lebanon.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Mission: Assist the Lebanese Government.....	12
Why Failure?.....	20
Peace Enforcement Not Peacekeeping .....	21
 <b>Chapter 3 — The Role of the United States.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Peacekeeping and the United States	
Argument: The US Should Not Contribute Troops	
to Peacekeeping Operations .....	25
Argument: The US Has Successfully Committed Troops to	
Peacekeeping Operations in the Past and Should	
Continue to Do So .....	27
Peace Enforcement and the United States .....	29
 Notes .....	31
 Works Consulted .....	34



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **PEACEKEEPING, PEACE ENFORCEMENT, AND THE UNITED STATES**

The 436 US Marine casualties that resulted from the United States' participation in a multinational peacekeeping operation in Beirut, Lebanon, speak to our failure to understand peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and the differences between them. Examining past successful as well as unsuccessful United Nations and multinational peacekeeping operations in the Middle East provides the lessons necessary to avoid the same costly mistake in future operations.

For a military operation to be labeled a peacekeeping operation, the host government must give its consent to have a peacekeeping force deploy on its soil, the deployed force must be impartial, and the use of force must be restricted to self-defense. When there is no desire for peace and no peace to keep, force may be necessary to enforce peace or to coerce the conflicting parties to observe an imposed peace. A peace enforcement operation, although it also has the consent of the host government, is willing to use force to impose a solution.

Successful peacekeeping operations have clearly defined and attainable objectives, begin with a desire for peace among the conflicting parties, and have the cooperation of all conflicting parties. Military leaders are given adequate time to plan the deployment of forces and, one hopes, are able to engage all conflicting parties in the planning process. Finally, successful peacekeeping operations create a buffer zone between conflicting parties.

I recommend the following to US military planners:

- Include lessons from past peacekeeping operations in future operations; specifically, recognize the inviolable nature of the core peacekeeping characteristics and the characteristics of past successful peacekeeping operations.

- Know the difference between peacekeeping operations and peace enforcing operations. Forces designed to accomplish one cannot accomplish the other.
- Do not commit US forces to peacekeeping operations. The United States serves as a symbol that will degrade the peacekeeping effort, is not seen as sufficiently impartial, and the US military is not currently trained to conduct peacekeeping operations. The opportunities for failure are high and the potential loss of US prestige too great to warrant US participation. The US should seek ways other than by contributing troops to support the United Nations in its peacekeeping efforts.
- Consider peace enforcing as the more appropriate role for the United States. Working in conjunction with the United Nations and various regional organizations, the United States can support peacekeeping by helping to establish the conditions for peace. The military is trained to conduct this type of mission, the US citizens understand this role, and the US has the resources required to project the power around the world.



# **PEACEKEEPING**

In September 1982, US Marines were deployed to Lebanon as members of a four-nation multinational force. During the 18 months they were in Beirut, the US Marines suffered 436 casualties; of this number, 238 were killed. These young troops died because their political and military leadership did not understand peacekeeping.

This paper is a small attempt to see that this needless loss of life is not replayed.

In this paper I will examine four peacekeeping operations, two conducted by the United Nations and two that were non-UN, multinational efforts:

- United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Golan Heights (UNDOF)
- United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)
- Multinational Force and Observers, Sinai Peninsula (MFO)
- Multinational Force, Lebanon (MNF)

These operations represent a mix of successful and unsuccessful operations, United Nations operations and non-United Nations operations, and, most importantly, provide the necessary insights to make meaningful recommendations about the US role in peacekeeping.

## THE BOTTOM LINE IN PEACEKEEPING

All peacekeeping operations have three core characteristics. These characteristics are inviolable; they must be present for the military operation to be labeled a peacekeeping operation.

### Core Characteristics

- Consent
- Impartiality
- Use of force for self-defense only

First, the host government must give its consent to have a peacekeeping force deployed on its soil. Virtually every peacekeeping mission undertaken by the United Nations has been initiated based on the invitation and consent of the host government. Without consent, the force is not there as a peacekeeper but as an invader. Second, the deployed force must be impartial. Ramesh Thakur, in his excellent book, International Peacekeeping in Lebanon, made this point:

Impartiality is the sine qua non for whatever effectiveness, authority, and leverage peacekeepers have, and perhaps more than anything else it makes peacekeeping a distinctive kind of conflict control activity, one that has worked where partisan control methods would have failed.<sup>1</sup>

Third, the use of force must be restricted to self-defense. The use of force is a last resort and never initiated by the peacekeeping force. According to the International Peace Academy, publishers of the Peacekeepers Handbook for the United Nations, the peacekeeping soldier may use his weapon only in defense of his life or in conjunction with his fellow soldiers to defend UN positions and/or property against attack.<sup>2</sup>

## THREE PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

### **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), Golan Heights**

On 31 May 1974, the governments of Israel and Syria signed the Agreement on Disengagement Between Israeli and Syrian Forces, which created a buffer zone between the two nations on Syrian-held territory.

The task given the 1,250 soldiers assigned to UNDOF was quite simple: monitor the cease-fire agreement reached between Israel and Syria. Specifically, UNDOF was to

- mark on the ground the actual location of the buffer zone.
- monitor each phase of the redeployment of Israeli and Syrian troops, carry out an inspection of the evacuated areas, and report its findings to the two parties.
- man the area of separation between the two forces.
- inspect the area and report to the parties on a regular basis, not less than once every 15 days and when requested by either party.

The agreement establishing the peacekeeping force was written by experienced military officers from Israel and Syria under the sponsorship of the United Nations, with participation of representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union. The agreement was written by military officers for the military officers who would be responsible for executing its terms. Because the agreement provided for almost every contingency UNDOF was likely to meet in the field, there was little opportunity for Israel or Syria to develop differing interpretations of its application or implementation.<sup>3</sup>

As is standard in all United Nations peacekeeping efforts, UNDOF was established initially for a period of six months and renewed at six-month intervals. In recent years, resolutions renewing the UN commitment to UNDOF have received unanimous support in the Security Council. UNDOF remains in position today.

The fact that there has been no breach of the agreement in the sixteen years since its signing speaks to UNDOF's great success. In fact, although the agreement allows for special inspections to be conducted at the request of either party, none have been requested.<sup>4</sup>

Given Israel's and Syria's highly armed and fundamentally distrustful posture towards each other, the need for a body such as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force to patrol the demilitarized area between them remains important. The buffer zone between the two armies lessens the chance of a small incident escalating. UNDOF also plays a critical role as a link between two states who do not have diplomatic relations with each other. As long as UNDOF is in place, the two countries have the ability to defuse a crisis and, perhaps, help prevent an undesired war.<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force benefitted from an agreement between two nations who sincerely desired an end to conflict in the region and from a clear, straightforward military mission statement supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union. There were, and are, no outside forces in the area of the Golan Heights that have both the desire and capability to affect this stability. Detailed planning was completed prior to the commitment of the forces and a buffer zone was established in a sparsely populated area that afforded easy observation and control over the area by the peacekeeping force.

#### **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)**

On 19 March 1978, as a result of an Israeli invasion into Lebanon, the United Nations passed Resolution 425, which established the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.

To understand why UNIFIL failed to accomplish these assigned objectives requires an understanding of the relevant actors in southern Lebanon at the time of UNIFIL's initial deployment.

Of all the actors, Israel was, and is, the most influential and singularly most responsible for UNIFIL's failure. Southern Lebanon serves as a staging ground for Palestinian terrorist raids into Israel as well as a potential source of water for Israel from the numerous rivers in the area, particularly the Litani River. These security and water issues have made southern Lebanon vital to Israel's national security. They have frustrated, and will continue to frustrate, any attempt to control this area. On 1 May 1979, in a letter to the UN Security Council, Israel put a bar to any future substantial steps by the Lebanese government to establish sovereignty in southern Lebanon.

It is obvious that in the present situation of foreign domination and intervention in Lebanon, imposed by Syria and the so-called PLO against the true interests of the people of Lebanon, the concepts of Lebanese "sovereignty" and "effective authority of the Government of Lebanon" cannot be realized.<sup>6</sup>

Like the Israelis, the Palestinians were foreign actors on the Lebanese stage. The Palestinians operated in small groups and the PLO leadership in Beirut did not have full control over all of them. In the eastern portion of UNIFIL's sector alone, the Norwegian contingent, during their initial deployment into the area, encountered no fewer than six different Palestinian factions. Some of these groups did not even formally accept cease-fires negotiated by the PLO leadership.<sup>7</sup> As Palestinians began to operate against Israel and to attract increasingly devastating Israeli retaliation upon Lebanon, their presence and activities created intense polarization of the various religious groups within Lebanon. For example, the Christian right, especially the Maronites, wanted to punish Palestinians, while the Moslem left believed that the Lebanese Armed Forces should be defending the country against Israel and not attacking fellow Arabs.<sup>8</sup>

The primary Lebanese forces in southern Lebanon were the so-called De Facto Forces. These Christian militia forces were armed, supplied, and closely controlled by Israel. Their leader was Major Saad Haddad, a renegade officer from the Lebanese National Army. To facilitate the UNIFIL mission and deployment, Haddad was provisionally recognized by the Lebanese government as the commander of Lebanese forces in southern Lebanon. When he ignored not only UNIFIL instructions, but orders from the Lebanese government, his

position as the commander of Lebanese forces in southern Lebanon was withdrawn by the government of Lebanon. UNIFIL conducted all negotiations with the De Facto Forces through Israel. Upon their withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 1978, Israeli forces turned over all of their positions to the De Facto Forces and not to UNIFIL as previously agreed. Israel argued that they considered the De Facto Forces legitimate representatives of the Lebanese government.

United States' failure to force Israeli compliance with United Nations resolutions was a major reason for UNIFIL's failure. For example, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the US vetoed a resolution that "condemns the non-compliance with resolutions by Israel" and that threatened Israel with a special meeting of the Security Council "to consider practical ways and means, in accordance with Charter of the United Nations," if Israel did not comply with demands for a cease-fire and a forthwith and unconditional withdrawal.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of United Nations peacekeeping operations are created in an ad hoc, impromptu fashion with attendant disadvantages for the conduct of subsequent operations.<sup>10</sup> In the case of UNIFIL, the resolution establishing UNIFIL was passed on 19 March 1978 following the 14 March 1978 invasion of Lebanon by Israel. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council within 24 hours on the structure and deployment of the peacekeeping force. The first troops were deployed in small increments and began arriving on 22 March 1978. The commander of UNIFIL was appointed only six days prior to the arrival of the first elements of the force. The headquarters staff was deployed for over four weeks before they could even begin to assume their responsibilities adequately.<sup>11</sup>

This inability to plan and prepare the deployment did not allow UNIFIL to establish an initial, strong command presence and gave the appearance of a lack of resolve. Consequently, UNIFIL was never in a position to lay down its own rules for the area of operations and instead was dictated to by the De Facto Forces in the south and the PLO in the north.<sup>12</sup> From this start, "it would have taken a military officer of superhuman qualities to overcome these difficulties."<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the life of UNIFIL, consideration has been given to expanding UNIFIL's authority to use force. Suggestions to allow UNIFIL soldiers to open fire when forces tried to infiltrate the UNIFIL area to set up new positions or when UNIFIL posts were denied necessary provisions were repeatedly rejected by the nations contributing troops to UNIFIL.<sup>14</sup> In his 1980 report on UNIFIL, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, stated,

A peacekeeping operation must achieve its major objectives through means other than the use of force, and this consideration certainly applies to UNIFIL . . . I believe that the main road to full implementation of the UNIFIL mandate lies in political and diplomatic efforts.<sup>15</sup>

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon was committed to a tight constraint on the use of force, typical of other United Nations peacekeeping operations; this was in spite of the fact that Israeli, PLO, and De Facto Forces have continued to put the lives of UNIFIL soldiers at risk every day. During the first ten years of the commitment, 151 UNIFIL soldiers had been killed and more than 200 had been wounded. In 1982, UNIFIL endured an Israeli invasion through their area.

The UNIFIL area of operations was undefined (the UN resolution required UNIFIL to "establish and maintain an area of operation to be defined in consultation with the parties concerned") and served as an incomplete buffer (the area was divided into two parts with a gap of about 15 kilometers between them). The assumption was that UNIFIL's area of deployment would cover most, if not all, of the area between the Israeli-Lebanese border and the Litani River to the north. Instead, the PLO and Christian militia strongholds within the area of operations were allowed to remain because of internal Lebanese government decisions, the principle of the nonuse of force except in self-defense, and pressure from Israel and many of the external Arab states. UNIFIL found it virtually impossible to prevent infiltration through the so-called buffer zone.

To their great credit, the UNIFIL soldiers, at no small risk to their personal safety, have been successful in mitigating the violence to the civilian population in southern Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> In fact, by one account, since UNIFIL's deployment in 1978, the inhabitants of

the area under their control have enjoyed "a measure of peace, security, freedom, and economic activity that is exceptional in contemporary Lebanon," as evidenced by an increase in population in the area from 10,000 in 1978 to nearly 400,000 in 1986.<sup>17</sup>

Typically, UNIFIL was established with a six-month term, which has been extended, although in many instances grudgingly, in three- and six-month increments to this day.

In summary, UNIFIL was given a broad, ambiguous mission, which was fraught with political functions. Lacking the cooperation of all of the parties involved, the best UNIFIL could do was to buy time during which a serious effort at a political solution might be attempted.<sup>18</sup> Neither the PLO nor Israel seems to desire peace, and Lebanon's government does not have the strength or stability to exercise central authority in the area. Planning time was not sufficient to prepare for so difficult a mission. The lack of an effective buffer between all of the parties to the conflict typified the overall failure of UNIFIL to be an effective peacekeeping force.

#### **Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), Sinai Peninsula**

The MFO is an independent, international organization established on 3 August 1981, when the UN Security Council was unable to agree on a United Nations peacekeeping force to support the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace. MFO was born out of the United States-sponsored Camp David talks between Israel and Egypt and was modeled after successful United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The supporting military plan was not published until December 1981. Similar to the plan developed for UNDOF on the Golan Heights, this document was very specific, covered all conceivable contingencies, and was written jointly by Egyptian, Israeli, and the MFO military staff. The MFO is responsible for monitoring and verifying the security arrangements of the peace treaty. MFO also provides a forum for regular meetings; Egyptian and Israeli liaison officers meet with the peacekeepers on an almost daily basis.

The agreement that established the MFO was not made subject to periodic review and renewal but was designed to be durable if not permanent. The agreement did stipulate,



however, that "the two parties may consider the possibility of replacing the arrangements hereby established with alternative arrangements by mutual agreement." Because of MFO's great success and the peaceful conditions established in the Sinai by the MFO, the establishment of alternate arrangements appears highly unlikely.

Both Israel and Egypt were responsible for the founding of MFO, both fund its continued existence, and both have an overriding stake in its smooth functioning. There have been no serious breaches of peace on the border between Egypt and Israel since the signing of the peace treaty and establishing the MFO.

MFO is in the position of supporting a peace settlement already reached rather than stabilizing a crisis, a situation unique among peacekeeping operations.<sup>19</sup>

## **SUCCESSFUL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS LOOK LIKE THIS**

Not every peacekeeping operation has been successful, that is, accomplished the objectives established for the operation. Of the three peacekeeping operations discussed in this chapter, two (the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights and the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula) were, and continue to be, successful. The third, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, must be described as a failure. Only in terms of humanitarian assistance to the residents of southern Lebanon has there been any success.

To be successful, peacekeeping forces must be given clear military objectives based on terms specifically agreed to by the conflicting parties.<sup>20</sup>

Peacekeeping will fail if peace is not desired by all parties to the conflict. Given a sincere desire for peace, the best guarantee for an effective peacekeeping force is a prior agreement between the conflicting parties that not only establishes the peacekeeping force but also includes a detailed agreement on its area of deployment.<sup>21</sup> A commitment to peace between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Syria ensured the success of MFO and

UNDOF, respectively. A lack of such a commitment between Israel and Lebanon ensured the overall failure of UNIFIL.

**Characteristics of Successful Peacekeeping Operations**

- Have clearly defined and attainable objectives.
- Begin with a desire for peace.
- Have the cooperation of all conflicting parties.
- Allow adequate military planning time.
- Create a buffer zone between conflicting parties.

Because of the restrictions on the use of force, any determined party, reasonably well armed, can defy a peacekeeping force effectively.<sup>22</sup> In the case of UNDOF and MFO there were no parties to the conflict other than the signatories to the agreements establishing the peacekeeping forces. This was not the case with UNIFIL. The lack of cooperation by the PLO, the De Facto Forces, and Israel was directly responsible for the failure of UNIFIL.

UNDOF and MFO have been invaluable in assisting the nations of Egypt, Israel, and Syria to reduce, if not eliminate, violence along portions of their common boundaries. On the other hand, UNIFIL has been far less successful because of the internal situation within Lebanon. One analyst went so far as to say

most of the central issues in the Lebanese conflict were not domestic but constitutional, involving the relationships among economic and religious groups in the society. There was nothing useful the United Nations could have done about them.<sup>23</sup>

UNIFIL was also a victim of the United Nations' zeal to deploy a peacekeeping force because of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. This haste, while commendable (and we have to assume that lives were saved because of the UN presence), had the long-term effect of putting UNIFIL on the ground in positions from which they could not accomplish their objectives.

Terrain that is sparsely populated, provides good visibility of the combatants, is easy to patrol, separates combatants by a significant distance, and is located on accepted demarcation lines or frontiers between conventional forces of conflicting parties provides peacekeeping operations with distinct geographic advantages and the capability to establish an effective buffer zone.<sup>24</sup> UNDOF and MFO created these conditions for success but UNIFIL did not.

Additionally, UNIFIL demonstrated that in the absence of an agreement between conflicting parties, peacekeeping forces cannot be held responsible for securing terrain considered vital by one of the parties. UNIFIL's success was judged by Israel in terms of whether or not UNIFIL stopped terrorism along the border.<sup>25</sup> Because of the lack of a buffer zone that denied infiltration, there was never a chance of success using this criterion. A United Nations peacekeeping force was not accepted as a buffer or guarantor of borders because of the UN prohibition on the use of force except in self-defense. A nation must protect its own vital interests or be assured that the force given that responsibility has the wherewithal to accomplish the task.

To summarize, successful peacekeeping operations have clearly defined and attainable objectives, begin with a desire for peace among the conflicting parties, and have the cooperation of all conflicting parties. Military leaders must have adequate time to plan the deployment of forces and, one hopes, engage all conflicting parties in the planning process. Finally, successful peacekeeping operations create a buffer zone between conflicting parties.

The absence of any of these characteristics will doom the most well intentioned peacekeeping effort to failure. The subject of the next chapter, the Multinational Force in Lebanon, is an example of a peacekeeping effort that failed because it did not heed the lessons of past peacekeeping operations.

## **2**

# **WHEN PEACEKEEPING DOES NOT WORK**

## **The Case of the Multinational Force in Lebanon**

### **MISSION: ASSIST THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT**

The United States participation in the Multinational Force peacekeeping effort in Lebanon from September 1982 to February 1983 can be described only as a failure. When the US Marines left Lebanon, the country was in flames: in northern Lebanon, Lebanese factions fought each other with the support of Syrian troops; various militias battled for control of Beirut; and, in the south, Lebanese factions fought each other and Israeli troops.<sup>26</sup> Over the course of their commitment in Lebanon, 238 Marines were killed and 151 were wounded, the majority in a single terrorist attack on a US Marine barracks located on Beirut International Airport.

On 6 June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon "to ensure that the area north of the Lebanese border would be demilitarized from all hostile elements for a distance which would place the Israeli towns and villages along the border out of range of terrorist artillery."<sup>27</sup> Expansion of the original objective carried Israeli forces into the city of Beirut on 14 June.

Trapped inside West Beirut were 6,000 to 7,000 PLO forces, led by Yasser Arafat. On 18 August, the Lebanese government forwarded identical letters to the governments of the United States, France, and Italy requesting their assistance in facilitating the withdrawal of PLO officials and fighters to prearranged locations out of Lebanon. The United States responded to the request with 850 Marines, who arrived on 25 August. They were joined by approximately 860 French and 575 Italian soldiers. Together they evacuated a total of 6,436 PLO members with nothing but a few minor incidents reported. The US, French, and Italian forces successfully completed a potentially dangerous mission and began to withdraw on 10 September. French forces were the last of the requested forces to leave Beirut, and they did so on 13 September 1982.<sup>28</sup>

In the fateful days following the departure of the French forces, three events brought the multinational forces back. On 14 September, Lebanese President-elect Bash Gemayel was assassinated. One day later, Israeli forces returned to the vacuum created in West Beirut by the evacuation of the PLO. And, most tragically, on 17 September the world woke to discover that Lebanese Christian militiamen, with Israeli Army support, had massacred 700 to 800 Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila Refugee Camps located on the outskirts of Beirut.<sup>29</sup>

The White House announced US support of a multinational peacekeeping force on 23 September 1982. The purpose of the force was outlined in the following statement issued the same day:

The MNF [multinational force] is to provide an interposition force at agreed locations and thereby provide the MNF presence requested by the Government of Lebanon to assist it and Lebanon's armed forces in the Beirut area. This presence will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area and thereby further its efforts to assure the safety of persons in the area and to bring to an end the violence which has tragically recurred.

On 29 September 1982, 1200 US Marines redeployed to Lebanon. The US contingent was joined by French, Italian, and later, British units. President Ronald Reagan, in an address to Congress the following day, said:

I believe that the continued presence of these US forces in Lebanon is essential to the objective of helping to restore the territorial integrity.

sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon. It is still not possible to predict the duration of the presence of these forces in Lebanon; we will continue to assess this question in the light of progress toward this objective.

To summarize, the MNF was given the following initial missions:<sup>30</sup>

- Provide an interposition force.
- Provide a multinational presence.
- Facilitate restoration of Lebanese government authority.
- Assist in assuring the safety of persons in the area.
- Assist in bringing an end to violence.

Secretary of State George Schultz, in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 21 September 1983, increased the significance of the US commitment to the MNF with the following statement:

At stake also are some concerns that affect our national interest and the security of our friends and allies. If American efforts for peaceful solutions are overwhelmed by brute force, our role is that much weakened everywhere. Friends who rely on us will be disheartened, and will be that much less secure. Moderates in the Arab world whom we are encouraging to take risks for peace will feel it far less safe to do so. The Soviet Union's efforts to disrupt our diplomacy will have scored a victory; radical and rejectionist elements will be strengthened. The cause of peace and justice will have suffered a setback. Israel's security on its northern border will be weakened.

From his testimony, additional missions for the US contingent to the MNF could be implied:

- prevention of the spread of Soviet military and political influence
- security of Israel's northern border
- creation of a visible symbol of international support <sup>31</sup>

On 23 September 1982, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) issued the following order, through the chain of command, to the US Marine forces preparing for deployment to Lebanon:

establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area . . .  
introduce US forces as part of a multinational force presence in the

Beirut area to occupy and secure positions along a designated section of the line from south of the Beirut International Airport to a position in the vicinity of the Presidential Palace; be prepared to protect US forces; and, on order, conduct retrograde operations as required.

The JCS also ordered the US Marines not to engage in combat and to use force only in self-defense or in defense of collocated Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) elements. This order remained, with very little modification, in spite of their deepening involvement in the fighting in and around Beirut, until the US Marines were withdrawn in February 1984.<sup>32</sup>

The missions given to the US Marines in Lebanon and those issued to the unsuccessful UNIFIL peacekeeping commitment ("restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area") are remarkably similar.

According to Geoffrey Kemp, former National Security Advisor to President Reagan;

there was little discussion or argument about this decision. It was an emotional and reactive response to a tragic event, influenced by the feeling that the US had assumed responsibility for the safety of the Palestinians and that our friends the Israelis had allowed the worst to happen . . . sending back the MNF was the least we could do.<sup>33</sup>

Planning time prior to commitment of troops in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights and in the Multinational Force and Observers on the Sinai Peninsula was lengthy and detailed. They were both successful peacekeeping operations.

On how long the US Marines would be committed in Beirut, President Reagan, in a message to Congress on 29 September 1982, had the following to say:

Although it is not possible at this time to predict the precise duration of the presence of US forces in Beirut, our agreement with the Government of Lebanon makes clear that they will be needed only for a limited period to meet the urgent requirements posed by the current situation.

Because UNIFIL had been in position for over four years, UNDOF eight years, and MFO six months but with an indefinite, if not permanent, commitment, it would have been more reasonable to assume that the MNF would be in Beirut for a very long time. This is particularly true, given the fact that the Lebanese had not exercised any central authority over Beirut for the seven previous years.

In Beirut, division into hostile factions was based primarily on religious, or as they were called, confessional, affiliations. To give some idea of the complicated nature of the interconfessional struggle, consider the following. There were 5 categories of confessional groups in the area: Shi'ite, Sunni, Druze, Christian and a miscellaneous category of non-aligned factions. In 1985, there were 15 Shi'ite sub-groups; Sunni had 13 subgroups, of which one was further divided into 3 subgroups; the Druze had 5 subgroups; and the Christians 9. In the miscellaneous category there were 14 groups.<sup>34</sup>

In November 1982, a decision was made to train and equip the Lebanese Armed Forces as an initial step in rebuilding the central authority of the government of Lebanon.<sup>35</sup> At that time, the LAF was 6 to 7 percent Druze, 60 percent Shi'ite, and the rest Christian. Christians, however, held a vastly disproportionate share of the most influential positions in the higher ranks to the disadvantage of the Muslims.<sup>36</sup> Because of the ethnic composition of the LAF, many of Lebanon's factions believed that the Lebanese Army was one more faction. By becoming an ally of the LAF, the MNF (primarily the US contingent) took the first, major step in destroying the semblance of impartiality necessary for peacekeeping.<sup>37</sup>

Attacks on US troops and facilities increased throughout 1983. The US Embassy in Beirut was destroyed by a truck bomb explosion in April 1983 that killed 47 people, and in July 1983, the US Marine positions in and around the Beirut International Airport were struck by rocket and mortar shells for the first time.

On 17 May 1983, Lebanon and Israel signed the Agreement on Withdrawal of Troops from Lebanon. In September, Israeli forces began deploying from positions in the Chouf Mountains east of Beirut to positions farther south.

As the Lebanese Armed Forces moved into the Chouf Mountains to occupy the vacated Israeli positions, they were immediately confronted by Druze factions who were no longer under Israeli control and looked to Syria for support. At the same time, Shi'ite groups in Beirut took advantage of the LAF commitment in the Chouf Mountains to become more active in the city. Civil war exploded once again. The initial decision made by the MNF was



to remain neutral. This decision was soon changed as defeat for the LAF became a real possibility.

The battle in the Chouf Mountains was politically and strategically important to the Lebanese government. Military victory would demonstrate the developing government's resolve and power and the army's ability and potential. Defeat would destroy the morale of the newly trained and equipped army. The MNF had a major stake in the outcome because of their support to the Lebanese Armed Forces. To allow them to fail would also indicate a failure on the part of the Multinational Force. For these reasons, on 19 September 1983 naval gunfire was used in direct support of the LAF for the first time, another major step in the MNF's descent from peacekeeping to active participation in the fighting. At no time before, during, or after was there a decision to change the role of the MNF from one of peacekeeper to active participant.

President Reagan assured Congress, when the MNF was committed,

In carrying out this mission, the American force will not engage in combat. It may, however, exercise the right of self-defense and will be equipped accordingly . . . there is no intention or expectation that US Armed Forces will become involved in hostilities.

Each US Marine deployed to Beirut carried with him a wallet-sized card that listed the Rules of Engagement under which he was to operate. According to the Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rules of engagement are "Directives issued by competent authority which delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered." In the case of the US Marines, the rules of engagement were very specific: action taken would be for self-defense only; only a minimum degree of force would be used to accomplish any mission; response to any hostile fire was to be returned proportionally, for example, rifle fire was to be returned by rifle fire, not tank fire; and the hostile fire must be directed at the Marine before he was allowed to return fire.

While the rules of engagement for the individual soldier changed very little over the 18 months the US Marines were deployed as part of the four-nation MNF, the use of naval gunfire, artillery, and tactical reconnaissance flights escalated throughout the deployment.

The need to shore up the Lebanese Armed Forces and the failure to find a political solution resulted in the escalating use of force on the part of the US forces. A direct consequence was increased retaliation by the conflicting parties, which was highlighted by the bombing of the US Marine barracks in October 1983.

Commenting later on the decision to support the LAF with naval gunfire, the commander of the naval task force off Beirut said,

We felt the naval gunfire in defense of the mission ashore was a sound, tactical move, but naval gunfire in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces was a definite change of mission and, of course, one of the things we had emphasized all the way through there was maintaining our neutral presence, and this meant especially regarding the civil war in Lebanon because the Marines were surrounded by the Shi'ite.

Senior US Navy officials testified before the Long Commission, which was established to investigate the truck bombing of the US Marine barracks, that "by mid-to-late August 1983, Druze, Shi'ite, and Syrian leaders had begun making statements to the effect that the Multinational Forces, especially the US element, was one of 'the enemy.'"<sup>38</sup> The MNF, in the eyes of the factional militias, had become pro-Israel, pro-Phalange, and anti-Muslim; a significant portion of the Lebanese populace no longer considered the US contingent of the MNF a neutral force.<sup>39</sup> The US was unquestionably in a military assistance role, and the Marines were allies of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the United States dedicated to the survival of the Gemayel government.<sup>40</sup> Because it failed to remain impartial, the MNF could no longer be considered a peacekeeping force.<sup>41</sup>

MNF, of course, lacked any buffer zone at all. Creating a buffer zone in a city is difficult at best but impossible in a city like Beirut, where there was a complete absence of agreement between conflicting parties and where a gang-like atmosphere prevailed.

The MNF, made up of units from the United States, France, Italy, and Great Britain, has been described as "four loosely coordinated national contingents which had separate commands, rules of engagement, and arrangements with the Lebanese government, and each made its own decisions on how best to defend itself and assist the Lebanese Army."<sup>42</sup> Each nation participating as part of the MNF signed a bilateral agreement directly with Lebanon

and conducted operations in its respective area in accordance with directions received from the national authorities of each nation.<sup>43</sup>

A Liaison and Coordination Committee and a Policy Oversight Committee coordinated the activities in Lebanon for each of the national contingents. The Liaison and Coordination Committee met daily and was comprised of representatives of each contingent and the Lebanese Armed Forces General Staff. The meeting was chaired by the Lebanese Armed Forces Operations Officer and functioned as a means to share information and not as a central point for coordinating military activities.<sup>44</sup> This committee was supervised by a Policy Oversight Committee comprised of the contributing nations' ambassadors to Lebanon and was chaired by President Gemayel or his designate. The level of coordination between the contingents decreased throughout the course of the multinational deployment. The Liaison and Coordination Committee meetings gradually decreased from daily to twice a week. There was almost no coordination during the withdrawal phase of the operation, a time when the lack of coordination could have proved disastrous. In fact, the United States sent a message to the other participants in the MNF the day before announcing the US withdrawal, not for consultation concerning the withdrawal but for information only. The British forces were withdrawn unilaterally as well.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of the limited coordination among the four members of the Multinational Force, a non-integrated command and control structure was not the reason MNF failed. Because of differing objectives of the four nations, insistence on an integrated command structure and a single MNF commander by any one nation would probably have kept the force from deploying at all.

## WHY FAILURE?

The MNF took none of the lessons of past successful peacekeeping operations with them into Beirut.

	Successful Peacekeeping Operations ( <u>UNDOF/MFO</u> )	Unsuccessful Peacekeeping Operation ( <u>UNIFIL</u> )	<u>MNF</u>
<b>Successful Peacekeeping Operations</b>			
Have clearly defined, attainable objectives	Yes	No	No
Begin with a desire for peace	Yes	No	No
Have the cooperation of all conflicting parties	Yes	No	No
Allow adequate planning time	Yes	No	No
Create a buffer zone	Yes	No	No

MNF was brought to life by a series of bilateral agreements between the nations that constituted the MNF and Lebanon. The missions were ambiguous, non-military, and in most cases, clearly unattainable.

There was no desire for peace among the many factions within Beirut. Israel and Syria refused to cooperate. Beirut, in the fall of 1982, was a city torn by factional warfare: a city in which the weak central government was incapable of exerting any control, a city in which ten years of internal struggle had resulted in the ready availability of sophisticated arms, and a city in which the number of parties involved in the struggle was almost impossible to track. Any attempt at creating a buffer zone would have been futile.

MNF was deployed as an emotional response to the massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. The most successful peacekeeping operations (as typified by UNDOF and MFO) were the culmination of many months of planning not only by the political policy makers but also by the military experts who would have to implement

the decisions on the ground. More time to appreciate the situation in Beirut and understand the objectives to be accomplished may have prevented the deployment of the US Marines as a peacekeeping force.

In hindsight, predicting failure for the US Marines seems a relatively easy task.

## PEACE ENFORCEMENT NOT PEACEKEEPING

The Report of the Department of Defense (Long) Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983, issued on 20 December 1983, concluded:

The mission of the USMNF was implicitly characterized as a peacekeeping operation, although "peace-keeping" was not explicit in the mission statement. In September 1982, the President's public statement, his letter to the United Nations' Secretary General and his report to Congress, all conveyed a strong impression of the peace-keeping nature of the operation. The subject lines of the JCS Alert and Execute Orders read, "U.S. Force participation in Lebanon Multinational Force (MNF) Peacekeeping Operation."

A full year after the initial deployment of US Marines, and after US forces had been engaged in extensive fighting in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces, and only eleven days before the killing of 238 US Marines in a terrorist attack, Congress, in a Joint Resolution (Public Law 98-119 dated 12 October 1983), stated that "the United States is currently participating in the multinational peacekeeping force."

Policy makers, both military and civilian, should have understood that peace, under the conditions that were present in Beirut at the time of the commitment, could only be achieved through the use of force, in this case, to suppress or destroy the various confessional groups, to drive Syria and Israel out of Lebanon, and to reinforce a weak central Lebanese government. Ironically, though, the more force used by the MNF, the less effective force became in achieving peace. The use of force, or more accurately the misuse of force, led the Multinational Force away from peacekeeping to peace enforcement.

As described in the chart below, the Multinational Force was not a peacekeeping force, in spite of the rhetoric from the President, Congress, and military leadership that claimed the contrary.

	Successful Peacekeeping Operations (UNDOF/MFO)	Unsuccessful Peacekeeping Operation (UNIFIL)	MNF
<b>Core Characteristics</b>			
Consent	Yes	Yes	Yes
Impartiality	Yes	Yes	No
Use of force for self-defense only	Yes	Yes	No

If the core characteristics (consent, impartiality, and use of force for self-defense only) are present, military operations can be labeled peacekeeping. If the military operation is required to use force to impose an end to a conflict in favor of one party over another, even with the consent of the host country, then the military operation is not peacekeeping but peace enforcement. The methods of one are not the methods of another.

The decision to escalate the use of force and not change the mission from peacekeeping to peace enforcement came from both the military and civilian leadership. The military was given a mission to accomplish: to assist the government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces in the Beirut area to restore the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon. When the mission was interpreted to include making the LAF combat-effective, the US military was not prepared for their protégé to be anything but successful. When they saw their months of training being destroyed in the Chouf Mountains, the full resources of the US military in the region came to the LAF's rescue. On the other hand, the civilian leadership and their constituents were not accustomed to seeing their fighting men hunkered down in position and doing nothing in response, particularly with all the firepower available off the coast of Lebanon.<sup>46</sup> The policy makers were not prepared for the long, potentially painful process that characterizes peacekeeping

operations. There was a move to the military solution when the political solution was not immediately forthcoming.

Peace enforcement, then, not peacekeeping, was the appropriate mission for the US Marines in Beirut. During the course of their commitment, the US Marines attempted to be both a peacekeeping force and a peace-enforcing force. Their actions belied peacekeeping but their size, equipment, and freedom of action was insufficient for enforcing peace in a very troubled Lebanon. They were inadequately prepared for either mission and, consequently, failed in both.

# **3**

## **THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES**

- **Should the United States contribute troops to peacekeeping operations?**
- **Are there roles the United States can play in support of peacekeeping other than providing troops?**
- **What is the role of the United States in peace enforcement?**

The answer to these questions, I would argue, is that the United States should not provide troops in support of peacekeeping operations; not as part of a United Nations peacekeeping effort nor as part of a multinational, non-UN peacekeeping effort. This argument holds even though the United States has in the past provided troops in support of a successful peacekeeping operation (the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai). The United States does, however, have a critical role to play in supporting peacekeeping operations and an even more critical role to play in peace enforcement.



# PEACEKEEPING AND THE UNITED STATES

**Argument: The US should not contribute troops to peacekeeping operations.**

The United States should not contribute troops to peacekeeping operations because

- the United States serves as a symbol that will degrade the peacekeeping effort.
- the United States is not seen as sufficiently impartial.
- the United States military is not currently trained to conduct peacekeeping operations.

In the eyes of many citizens of third world nations, the United States is an imperialistic nation that symbolizes their colonial past and is responsible for their current economic impoverishment. Even though this characterization is, in most cases, undeserved, the arrival of US troops on their soil, even if part of a United Nations peacekeeping force, may be deeply resented. This resentment will certainly degrade the peacekeeping effort.<sup>47</sup>

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger opposed the US military involvement in the Multinational Force peacekeeping effort in Lebanon. Their opposition was based, in part, on their belief that peacekeeping missions are best left to smaller and traditionally neutral nations. They argued that, by virtue of US superpower status, the use of US forces in such a role complicates the international diplomatic equation and could evoke a variety of anti-American actions.<sup>48</sup> General John W. Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a statement to members of Congress investigating the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983, said,

It is important for us to recognize most clearly that it is not where we are that makes us the targets, it is who we are. And that is a very key point. We are going to get shot at because we are the United States of America.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, a United Nations peacekeeping force comprised of five to ten national contingents does not face this same resentment. Because the contingents are not from major powers, have no stake in the outcome of the conflict other than peace, and deploy under a United Nations flag, they have a much better opportunity for success than does a peacekeeping operation involving the United States. When a force deploys under the flag of the United Nations, there is a respect rendered that is not available to any other force, regardless of the combat power inherent to the force.

The US military leadership correctly argued against commitment of forces into Beirut because they feared an inability to remain neutral in such a volatile area.<sup>50</sup> As argued earlier in this paper, impartiality is a core characteristic that distinguishes peacekeeping from all other forms of conflict control. The United States, because it is a world power, will find it difficult, if not impossible, to take an impartial stand on an issue in any part of the world. Peacekeeping operations have no winners and losers. Peacekeeping troops do not have enemies but are there to help all parties keep peace.<sup>51</sup>

For peacekeeping to be accomplished successfully the force must be trained. US troops do not have the language training and cultural sensitivity that allows them to mix easily with their fellow peacekeepers or with the citizens of the host country. While in Beirut, the US Marines' conduct was markedly different from their French, British, and Italian counterparts. The US Marines displayed a more aggressive attitude. Their positions in and around the airport were dug in with overhead protection. They slept in bivouacs near their positions. They wore steel helmets and were equipped with large, aggressively armed tracked vehicles that did not mix easily with the traffic in Beirut.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast, the European contingents were more sensitive to the local population. All of the European contingents had available to them linguists who could communicate not only with the local population but also with their counterparts in the Lebanese government and armed forces. The Italians were careful to appoint staff with recent UNIFIL experience in key posts. The British were experienced in urban operations because of their

involvement in Northern Ireland, and the first British commander was a French linguist, a language widely used by Lebanese officials.<sup>53</sup>

The armed forces of the Nordic nations have instituted special training programs for their soldiers, a function of having accepted the fact that peacekeeping will continue to be a major part of their professional military lives.<sup>54</sup> They are prepared to accomplish a peacekeeping mission upon request by the United Nations and hope to avoid the painful adjustment that comes when a unit is tasked to accomplish a mission significantly different from its training.<sup>55</sup>

**Argument: The US has successfully committed troops to peacekeeping operations in the past and should continue to do so.**

The United States should contribute troops to peacekeeping operations because

- the United States has the resources (money, troops, equipment, transportation) to support peacekeeping operations.
- involvement of the United States focuses world attention.

Although the United Nations has typically avoided inviting major powers to participate in peacekeeping operations, major power involvement is not unprecedented. The French participated in UNIFIL and the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai is an example of a very successful peacekeeping operation that has three major powers as primary contributors: the United States, Great Britain, and France. Participation by Fiji, Colombia, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, and Uruguay, though, give the MFO geographical and political diversity.

Although the United States has participated successfully with the MFO since April 1982, the following circumstances in the Sinai are not likely to be duplicated in any other peacekeeping operation.

- Peace was established by treaty between the conflicting parties prior to the US deploying troops to the area.
- The terms of the peace were mediated by the President of the United States and the level of US commitment was obviously strong.
- The geography of the Sinai allows for a huge buffer zone, reducing the opportunity for conflict.
- There are no third parties in the Sinai who have the desire and ability to upset the peace that has been established.

There are two major advantages for having the United States contribute troops to a peacekeeping operation. The first advantage is resources. The United States brings a large defense budget, a well-supplied military force, and the capability to move that force around the world. The second major advantage accrues because of United States' status as a superpower. US involvement in a particular issue or region focuses world attention. When the political, economic, and military power of the United States is committed, the significance of the issue or region is enhanced; all of the nations of the world will react, whether positively or negatively, to US involvement.

Unfortunately, these advantages evaporate rather quickly if the United States deems it in their best interest to withdraw, as they did in Lebanon in 1984 after being on the ground only 18 months. A United Nations peacekeeping force, if committed instead of the Multinational Force, would very likely be there today; UNIFIL has been operational since 1978, UNDOF since 1974, MFO since 1981, and there has been a peacekeeping force on the island of Cyprus since 1964.

The prestige of the United States is a precious asset that can effectively focus world attention on a situation and arouse world opinion to take action, one hopes positive steps to bring peace and stability. This prestige, though, comes at a high price. If the prestige of the United States has been committed, then certainly the full power of the United States has also been committed; the US is too proud a nation to allow any loss of or damage to its prestige. Because of this, the situations where the United States should be willing to put its

prestige on the line should be very few indeed. In fact, one of the central objectives of the United Nations is to avoid just this kind of involvement by isolating local hostilities in order to prevent major power conflagration.<sup>56</sup>

For these reasons, the United States should not provide troops in support of peacekeeping operations. There are, however, other ways that the US can contribute significantly to peacekeeping. For example:

- Supporting UN resolutions provides the solidarity and show of strength by the Security Council needed to initiate a successful peacekeeping mission.
- Bilateral negotiations with parties to the conflict in conjunction with United Nations peace initiatives can be enormously effective in maintaining peace.
- Transportation and logistic support are vital in deploying and sustaining peacekeeping operations.

The United States should allow the smaller countries an opportunity to serve the world as peacekeepers and be content to play a strong supporting role.

## PEACE ENFORCEMENT AND THE UNITED STATES

Peacekeeping is based on consent of the host nation, is impartial, and uses force for self-defense only. A peace enforcement operation, on the other hand, though it also has the consent of the host government, is willing to use force to impose a solution. When there is no desire for peace and no peace to keep, force may be necessary to enforce peace or to coerce the parties to the conflict to observe an imposed peace.

The Multinational Force in Lebanon was a peace enforcement operation. Let me offer two more examples of peace enforcement.

A successful argument can be made that the mission given UNIFIL was more appropriately a peace enforcement mission. The United Nations failed to bring peace to southern Lebanon because of UNIFIL's inability to coerce the PLO, De facto Forces, and

Israel into accepting peace. There was no desire for peace and no peace to keep. A multinational peace-enforcement operation committed to forcing the withdrawal of all foreign armies from Lebanon and securing the boundaries of Lebanon would have been a necessary first step in allowing Lebanon the freedom to resolve its internal problems. A multinational force given a peace enforcement mission could have prevented the Israeli invasion in 1982, the consequent tragedies in Beirut, and given Lebanon a head start on settling the internal problems that they have only recently begun to address.

Operation Desert Shield is another example of peace enforcement. The sanctity of borders was violated when Iraq invaded Kuwait. That act alone should have been, and was, enough to cause the nations of the world to come to the support of Kuwait. The United States formed the core of the multinational force arrayed against Iraq, which successfully confronted Iraq and began the process of freeing Kuwait from her captors.

Peace enforcement, unfortunately, will continue to be necessary to assist smaller nations to maintain their borders, to enforce international law, and to ensure that the rights of citizens are respected. Prevention and containment of violence is an important commitment that the major powers of the world must make to the other nations. Peace enforcement does not suggest that the US has the right, or responsibility, to intervene unilaterally in the affairs of other nations. United States peace-enforcement operations must be accomplished as part of legitimate multinational forces. Working in conjunction with the United Nations and various regional organizations, the United States can support peacekeeping by helping to establish the conditions for peace. The US military is trained to conduct this sort of mission, American citizens understand this role, and the US has the resources required to project the power around the world.

Peacekeeping is the province of the United Nations and the smaller nations of the world. Peace enforcement is the appropriate role for the United States.

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